

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1995

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 5649

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CIEC

SUBJ: SECRETARY'S BILATERAL WITH PAKISTAN FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: SECTO 5022

1. OUR READING OF REFTEL IS THAT AZIZ AHMED - AT BHUTTO'S DIRECTION - CHOSE THE EQUIVOCATION OPTION. ALTHOUGH THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S REHASHING OF PAST GRIEVANCES MAY HAVE BEEN MORE EXTENSIVE THAN WE ANTICIPATED, HIS REFERENCES TO THE POSSIBILITY OF RESUMING GOOD RELATIONS IN THE FUTURE LEAVE THE PM FREE TO MOVE EITHER WAY, DEPENDING PRIMARILY ON HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION.

2. WE HAVE SOME MISGIVINGS ABOUT AZIZ AHMED'S STATEMENT THAT IF THE MEETING WAS "SATISFACTORY" THE PM WOULD MAKE A "SUITABLE" PUBLIC COMMENT. OUR CONCERN IS THAT BHUTTO'S AND OUR DEFINITIONS OF "SATISFACTORY" AND "SUITABLE" MAY NOT COINCIDE, SO THAT EVEN IF HE DID MAKE A STATEMENT WE COULD FIND OURSELVES NO CLOSER TO A RESOLUTION OF THE ISSUE. OUR SKEPTICISM IS HEIGHTENED BY AZIZ AHMED'S STATEMENT THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT, ESPECIALLY IF ELECTIONS ARE HELD, TO CONTAIN AND RESTRAIN THE PUBLIC REACTION AGAINST US. THIS MUST BE TAKEN WITH A LARGE GRAIN OF SALT. IF THE PRIME MINISTER THOUGHT IT IN HIS

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POLITICAL INTERESTS TO STOP THE CAMPAIGN, IT WOULD QUICKLY AND ALMOST COMPLETELY DISAPPEAR WITH A FEW WELL-CHOSEN WORDS TO HIS PARTY MINIONS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

3. THE SECRETARY'S REJOINDER THAT A STATEMENT FROM THE PM SEEMED NECESSARY AND CONSTRUCTIVE LEAVES THE BALL IN THE PAKISTANI COURT, WHICH IS WHERE IT SHOULD BE. WE

WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE PAKISTANI PRESS AND STATEMENTS OF GOP OFFICIALS TO SEE IF THE ANTI-US CAMPAIGN EITHER MODERATES OR CEASES. BHUTTO'S DECISION IN THIS REGARD WILL CONTINUE TO BE BASED ON THE SAME CRITERION HE HAS USED SINCE MARCH 7 - HOW USEFUL IS THE CAMPAIGN TO HIS DOMESTIC POLITICAL GOALS. ITS IMPACT ON BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE US IS A SUBSIDIARY CONCERN.

4. WE WILL OFFER ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON WHERE WE GO FROM HERE IN US-PAK RELATIONS AFTER WE HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO EVALUATE (A) WHAT CHANGES IF ANY OCCUR IN THE GOP'S TREATMENT OF THE UNITED STATES IN THE DAYS AHEAD, AND (B) WHETHER A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WITH THE OPPOSITION EMERGES AND ITS IMPACT ON THE SETTING FOR US-PAK RELATIONS. IN THE MEANTIME, I HOPE WE WILL USE THE LINE WITH THOSE SUCH AS THE SHAH AND THE CHINESE WHO MAY URGE US TO BE MAGNANIMOUS WITH BHUTTO, THAT WE HAVE INDEED BEEN SO, THAT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPROVED RELATIONS CLEARLY RESTS WITH BHUTTO HIMSELF, AND IF THEY SHARE OUR DESIRE TO SEE US-PAK RELATIONS IMPROVE, WE WOULD HOPE THEY WOULD CONVEY THEIR VIEWS TO THE GOP ALSO.
CONSTABLE

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